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COUNTRY Colombia

DATE DISTR. 25 Feb 1949

SUBJECT CTC Refusal to Participate in UTC Meeting

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SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

1. In conjunction with the Eucharistic Congress which opened on 26 January 1949 in Cali, the Union de Trabajadores Colombianos (UTC - Union of Colombian Workers) planned a labor meeting for 27-29 January to which all labor unions were invited to send delegates.
2. Victor Julio Silva, President of the Confederacion de Trabajadores de Colombia (CTC - Confederation of Colombian Workers), discussed the letter of invitation from the Bishop of Cali with the CTC Executive Committee. The CTC refused to attend on the grounds that the planned meeting would be essentially religious in character and not in harmony with the spirit of the CTC. CTC leaders stated that the invitation was sent with the knowledge that it could not be accepted because the UTC meeting would coincide with the VII General Plenum of the CTC in Bogota and was therefore only a move on the part of the clergy to strengthen the Catholic-dominated UTC.
3. Not only did the CTC refuse to send delegates to the meeting in Cali, but it also instructed the Federacion de Trabajadores del Valle (Fedetav) that none of its members should attend the UTC meeting or the Eucharistic Congress, as it was their belief that the clergy were responsible for the accusations that the CTC and the Communists were planning sabotage of the Congress.*
4. In response to an inquiry from Fedetav whether it could accept the invitation to attend the Eucharistic Congress, the Ministry of Labor gave directions that no labor organizations could send official delegates, as that would be a violation of labor statutes, but that this did not prohibit attendance by laborers as individuals.

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